



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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- Interview with Governor Tim Kaine, who comments on the importance of caregivers

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### **Two Bedford women receive Governor's Caregiver Recognition Award**

*Dedication to loved ones keeps them going*

**Richmond, Va.** — Their faces may be different, but their stories are very much the same – they are deeply committed to voluntarily providing care for their loved ones. Lucy Peak and Linda Smith, both of Bedford, have been recognized for the care they selflessly give.

Peak and Smith were among nine outstanding caregivers from throughout the Commonwealth to receive the Governor's Caregiver Recognition Award in a special ceremony on April 23 in Virginia Beach. The annual awards program, in its third year, is sponsored by the Virginia Council on the Status of Women and is designed to honor the more than one million unpaid caregivers within Virginia.

"The Caregiver Award symbolically thanks all of the caregivers in the Commonwealth who lovingly take care of family and friends day after day. Although the award is only given to a few caregivers, it serves as a reminder of the tremendous contributions all caregivers within Virginia make," said Governor Timothy Kaine.

Peak and her husband had only been married a few years when an accident in the 1960s left him disabled. She cared for him at home for 39 years and continues to oversee his care now that he is hospitalized. She also took on the role as caregiver for her mother for 10 years.

For 13 years, Smith has been the caregiver of her three grandchildren, including one with spina bifida, for whom she provides round-the-clock care. Smith taught her grandson and herself sign language to give them a way to communicate.

As caregivers, Peak and Smith are part of a growing trend across the country and the Commonwealth. Last year, Virginia ranked 12th in the nation in the number of family caregivers, with a total of nearly 700,000 people caring for relatives.

It is estimated that there are more than 44 million volunteer caregivers nationwide. The need for such individuals is expected to increase throughout the next 25 years as the population grows and ages.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov>

[http://www.dss.virginia.gov/community/council\\_women/caregiver.html](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/community/council_women/caregiver.html)

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/as/caregiver.html>

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*Editor's note: Interviews and photos available upon request.*